DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 731 FL 024 405

AUTHOR Wood, David John
TITLE Culture and Language Teaching through Movies--A Case Study.
PUB DATE Jan 97
NOTE 23p.; Based on "Video and Culture in Language Teaching," paper presented at Japan Association of Language Teachers Conference (Hiroshima, Japan, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Journal of Chikushi Jogakuen University; n9 p105-25 Jan 1997

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; *Cross Cultural Studies; *Cultural Education; Discussion (Teaching Technique); *English (Second Language); *Films; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Interpersonal Relationship; Language Patterns; Language Usage; Problem Solving; Second Language Instruction; Sentence Structure; *Sociocultural Patterns; Tenses (Grammar); Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS *Kramer vs Kramer

ABSTRACT

A variety of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instructional activities based on the film "Kramer vs. Kramer" are described. The first involves having students identify the characters and their relationships to one another, and at a higher level, information about their characteristics and feelings. A second is an exercise in observation of physical details in the film, including description of actions using various verb tenses. An exercise leading into composition has students in different groups match portions of sentences from a letter, then compose a letter or diary from one character's point of view. In a fourth activity, one group of viewers prepares questions about a scene for another group. Two dialogue exercises focus on emotions expressed and vocabulary usage in two pivotal conversations. In relation to one film segment in which time is a critical element, students can develop questions and answers concerning time and its passage. An additional activity focuses on language use in resolving legal matters. Comparison exercises can be in the form of a debate about the characters. Discussions can focus on the merit of legal decisions, parallels in various scenes, and changes occurring during the story. Extension and followup exercises are also suggested. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 405 731

"Culture and Language Teaching through Movies - A Case Study"

David John Wood

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Wood

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

筑紫女学園大学紀要　第9号別刷
1997年1月
福岡県太宰府市石坂

Reprinted from *Journal of Chikushi Jogakuen University*
No. 9, pp.105—125, January 1997
Ishizaka, Dazaifu-shi,
Fukuoka-ken, Japan

FL024405

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"Culture and Language Teaching through Movies - A Case Study"

David John Wood

Introduction

This case study presents one example of how using video in language teaching can create many valuable spinoff activities leading to intercultural insights. While the propensity of movies is towards often romanticized American stereotypes, careful selection and treatment can help students distinguish between elements that are too fictive and those that are objective enough to possess not only relevance for a single culture but for many cultures through background research and comparison. At the linguistic level, more important than the validity of the cultural model is that of the communicative interaction presented.

Giving students a character tree is the most obvious way to introduce the movie *Kramer vs. Kramer*. At any level of ability, it is important to develop students' tolerance to ambiguity, at the same time as promoting their powers of study independence. From the outset, therefore, the instructor must control carefully both the amount of information allowed the students plus any tendency on his or her part to overteach by giving answers before students have exhausted their own resources to research them alone. Therefore, the character tree should only include the relationships (a client; the boss; a colleague; the father; the son; the mother; the first lawyer; a neighbor; the ex-husband; and the second lawyer). The actual names can be given separately in random order for students to guess the matching

names.

Rather than correcting any wrong guesses, the instructor simply tells students they have to identify any characters they could not guess correctly by deducing who is who from a short dictation which explains the relationships and names using synonyms for the original words given. This dictation can also give a little extra information to help build up students' knowledge of the characters, and to enrich the learning event by responding to the motivation to find out more that was created by withholding certain points in the initial presentation of the character tree. For example, the dictation could include an entry like: "Margaret lives in the same building as Ted, Billy and Joanna." Students should thus be able to deduce that she is their neighbor.

To add an extra dimension at the point of entry to a film, photos or frozenframe shots of some of the main characters depicting specific emotions can be shown students for them to describe both appearance and feeling. In the first ten minutes or so of the film, there are several possible choices. The most suitable show the following: Ted, the father, with medium length, black hair, looking confident and contented; Jim, his boss, with gray, thinning hair, looking cheerful and mature; Joanna, the wife, with long, light hair, looking tired and anxious; Margaret, the neighbor, with long, dark hair, looking concerned and worried; and, Billy, the son, with medium length, fair hair, looking worried and angry.

At a linguistic level, the different implications of definite as opposed to indefinite articles can be studied via the character tree. The teacher can simply point out how "a/an" tends to mean one of several, while "the" usually specifies that there is only one, or that a particular one is being referred to. A number of synonymous expressions (seems, looks, appears, and so on) can be practiced when discussing the photos or frozen frames.

Similarly, the difference between "look like" and "be like" can be advantageously studied in the same context.

Observation

A focal point, as it were, of the opening scenes of *Kramer vs. Kramer* is Joanna's suitcase. The award-winning camerawork of the movie is evident throughout, so to alert students' attention to such a rewarding area of visual study from the outset will provide many rich possibilities for linguistic development as students try to express the intricacies of what the camera lens offers them.

After an initial viewing, the instructor can employ the "Total Physical Response" method (mentioned in previous studies) to have students practice all the movements involved. This can be accomplished by miming individual movements. Each movement (putting the bag away, taking it outside, packing it, zipping it up, snatching it, opening it and putting it by the door) can be expressed in English at the same time as making the matching movement for students to repeat. Adding actions that do not occur makes the subsequent observation more challenging. Thus adding some movements that do not occur (such as hiding the bag, throwing it down, locking it, carrying it with both hands and so on) means that students have to watch even more carefully to find which movements actually took place. Students then practice in pairs, either making the movement only for their partners to identify, or stating an action for their partners to act out until they achieve a sufficiently high level of competence.

Naturally, the movements that were explained by the instructor were done so in a random order different from the actual order in which they occur in the film. Students then try to deduce what the correct order was,

and also ascribe the action to either Ted or Joanna. Before watching, they can use a future tense, then while half the class watches, the viewers can describe to the others what they see using the present-continuous tense. Groups swap, and those students who did not watch first time now watch, trying to describe the movements in the present continuous for the others to act out. Finally, they report the action in the past tense to complete their observation assignment. This time, they can include conjunctions to sequence the action, as well as adverbs to express the mood of the agent in the case of each individual movement. They can also try to interpret the significance of the movements to explain the characters' motives/emotions in greater detail in reference to the dialogue that they hear at the same time (for example: "Joanna packed her suitcase because she said she could not 'hack it' living with Ted any more.")

There are several possible follow ups which the instructor may wish to pursue according to the time available. These can include games, such as having teams of students give each other directions rapidly or at the same time as making mismatched movements themselves to try and catch each other out. Alternatively, students can brainstorm completely different sets of actions for others to guess what activity they are demonstrating, or what object it is that such movements can be performed with.

Composition

As an appropriate lead in to a composition activity at most levels, an important strategy with film-communication study is to give the activity validity in terms of the story itself. After his mother has walked out on his father, Billy is full of anxiety about the fading prospect of her return. While he is watching a cartoon on television, Ted enters the room announcing that

a letter from Joanna has just arrived. Hopes raised high, Billy turns the volume down and starts listening to his father.

At this point, the instructor can stop the video and divide the class into pairs or two groups, giving one half of the students half of Joanna's letter, and the other half of the class the missing halves of each sentence in a jumbled order. Each sentence is split just before or after a medial conjunction to illustrate clearly the cohesive quality of English composition. Students with the correctly ordered sentence beginnings read a line at a time for the others to listen to and guess which of their lines is most likely to complete each sentence. If they can guess, they note down the first part of the sentence (which they can ask to be repeated as many times as necessary) and then dictate their completing half of a sentence for the other students to write down. If they cannot complete the activity first time, they can swap papers and change roles to try again. Finally they watch the scene and confirm their guesses, at the same time as noting Billy's reaction to the news that Joanna will not be returning — he turns the volume back on at full blast.

Experiencing the act of composition in this way will provide an excellent foundation for the students to prepare their own composition assignments. As this scene occurs within the first quarter of the movie, they can summarize everything that has taken place up to this point, and write a letter from Billy's viewpoint to tell his mother all about the problems he is facing in his life with a single parent who knows next to nothing about bringing a child up. They should also include a strong plea from Billy for Joanna to reconsider her decision to stay away, and write in as persuasive a tone as possible, so that the instructor grades the letters on the basis of which contains the most complete information as well as which is the most convincing.

Students should be encouraged to embark on extensive composition studies in the form of a diary from the viewpoint of one of the principle characters in the action. This letter, therefore, can provide a suitable entry point into students keeping a diary from Billy's point of view of his life alone with Ted. The secret journal can run not only to the end of the movie, but can also be extended beyond the end as students imagine how Billy's life continues after the close, with Billy continuing to live and grow up with only a father. The instructor may choose as an alternative to vary the viewpoint and have students write shorter diary entries from the viewpoints of different characters.

Split Viewing

In the first half of the movie, two accidents occur involving Ted and Billy. Just before the half way point, then, splitviewing can be used first as a review exercise, and then, to link up with the next scene, again as a way of proceeding with an important episode which becomes a crucial reference point towards the end of the film.

As before, the instructor divides the class into two. One group re-watches the earlier accident with the sound turned off. The other group is given a list of prompts from which they have to devise their own questions. For example, these can be in the form of sentence fragments, which, when combined in the correct order, recount the entire event. With a time limit set by the viewing period for the group that is watching, the students preparing the questions are unlikely to be able to piece together many complete sentences, so instead they have to compose questions from the prompts, like: "knocked over" = "Who knocked something over?" or "his photos" = "What happened to his photos?" and so on. If a student does

manage to reconstruct a sentence from the different parts, then they can use this to confirm their reconstruction thus: "from the dining room" "not to bring" "told him" "his drink" = "Did Ted tell Billy not to bring his drink from the dining room?" As none of the prompts would include names, students will at least have to determine the identities of the agent for each action.

Groups then swap, so that the previous viewers prepare questions for the second accident scene, while the previous questioners prepare to watch. To increase the challenge, two kinds of question can be given for students to memorize, simple questions, such as "What was the boy doing first?" and "Where did the man take the boy?" plus statements like: "Someone pushed the boy" "The boy had an anesthetic" and "The boy may lose his eyesight." In the case of the latter, students either devise questions ("Did someone push the boy?") or quote the statement and then ask the others to verify: "The boy may lose his eyesight. Is that right or wrong?" Again, no names should be included as this both offers practice in asking more generalized questions as well as giving students the extra task of finding out exactly who did what.

As a follow up/ the class can write up the accidents as entries in Billy's (and/or Ted's) diary. To do so, they must rewatch closely to add extra details, and both set the scene by explaining what happened immediately before each incident, as well as what followed. As mentioned above, the second accident has important repercussions for later scenes, and so such intensive study here is crucial to understanding the way the film develops later on. As a final reinforcement, the instructor can devise simple summaries but in a mismatched sequence to get students to distinguish the details of the two events in a subsequent class. He or she can thus read a small point from either accident and ask students to identify it as belonging

either to the earlier or later incident.

Key Conversations

In the central scenes of *Kramer vs. Kramer*, two important dialogues take place at restaurants between, respectively, Ted and his wife, and, Ted and his boss. The first of these is fairly detailed, but the key points can be the focus of a study of emotional range, as the dialogue starts off politely and nervously and passes through the whole spectrum of feelings till it reaches outrage. First, students in pairs can be given either Ted's or Joanna's main lines to read through. Next a list of adverbs in pairs, indicating the way the lines are actually delivered, can be distributed with no indication of which one belongs to whose line. The list will include: happily; nervously; politely; confidently; sincerely; firmly; angrily; persistently; doubtfully; and, sadly. Sometimes the same emotion matches both lines, but generally, they are different.

Students in their second readthrough have to judge which emotion might go with which line, and attempt to deliver it accordingly. Next, students listen only to the dialogue with the picture cut. They should be almost certain by now of the matching emotion, and their own ability to produce the same emotion should be increasing with each rendition. Finally, they watch with the picture visible and confirm any remaining doubts. At this point, they can swap roles and practice the emotions that only their partner has tried so far to round off their study.

The second restaurant conversation can be studied from a different angle by concentrating on a vocabulary exercise. Jim has to give Ted the painful news that he is terminating his employment. The interesting point is that, when he broaches the subject, he tries to express it as euphemistical-

ly as possible ("I'm making a few changes" and "I'm letting you go") while Ted, who is mortified as this means he will lose Billy, uses the bluntest diction he can think of ("You're firing me?") as he begs his boss to reconsider. Before they watch, students can guess from a list of reported speeches, which Ted or Jim will say or ask, with a range of synonyms for losing one's job, and a balance between the passive and active voice for them to manipulate. After listening once, students next judge for themselves which are the kindest and least kind ways of saying someone is out of work. Finally, students roleplay the conversation fully equipped with a knowledge of the appropriate register for either speaker.

As a follow up, the study of work-related vocabulary can be extended by designing a variety of exercises to develop students' knowledge of the everyday lexicon of employment: resign; give one's notice; promote; discharge; quit; lay off; and so on. They can also practice switching from active to passive voice by rewriting the original lines that were distributed when the conversation study was introduced, and, in the context of the movie, analyze and explain in English Jim's reasons for his decision, Ted's reasons for protesting it and the likely outcome of this scene on Ted's upcoming court battle for the custody of his son.

Problems

By this stage in the film, Ted's problems will be more than apparent. Student interest in how he can possibly hope to tackle them will be at a peak. This interest can be fully exploited by the instructor in the next scene. After his lawyer tells Ted that he now has no chance of keeping Billy because he has no job, Ted resolves to find a job within twenty four hours, even though it is nearly Christmas and most firms are thinking more about

celebrating rather than interviewing or hiring.

Ted's frenetic job hunt is best studied in a splitviewing format. The central preoccupation of this segment is the race against time, so, while one group prepares questions beginning either "When", "What time" or "How long", the viewing students watch the captioned action in silence, noting down any times, dates or related points they notice. Prior to the exercise, as a warm up activity, the instructor can have a free question session covering general questions about time, such as "When will you finish this course?" "What time does you next class start?" "How long does it take you to do your homework?" and the like.

As with other cases of splitviewing, the students preparing questions should do their best to memorize them during the time the others are viewing. Questions to be posed can include; "When will a job be available according to the employment advisor?" "What time does the interview start?" and "How long does it actually take Ted to get the job once the appointment has started?" The last of these, for example, demands that students not only assimilate the dialogue, but also watch the picture very carefully, as the answer can only be arrived at by noticing what time the wall clock says at the appropriate points in the scene. Naturally, then, the instructor must advise the viewers in advance to concentrate equally on dialogue and picture in order to calculate the passing of time too.

One viewing is unlikely to suffice, so the groups will swap after their first attempt. Even if they are confident that they have found all the answers, they should be diligent enough to confirm their initial ideas. During the second viewing, it is advisable to play the scene with sound and picture to make sure there can be no mistaking the content of the conversation. To add an element of variation, this time the new questioners can ask the questions in a different order or possibly rephrase them, or even devise

new questions of their own to confirm points that were not covered in the original set of questions.

Other dimensions of study that suggest themselves in the context of this scene include having students study the interview more closely to understand how Ted successfully applies time pressure to force his new employer's hand in making an instant decision, and conversely, the delaying tactics the latter attempts, as both are transferable to other situations.

Language Study

While legal systems and their social significance vary greatly from country to country, at least in American society, the language of the courtroom is very much a part of everyday vocabulary. It can therefore form a perfectly valid point of study for the student of English as a second or foreign language, and the way it is contextualized so vividly in *Kramer vs. Kramer* provides an excellent focal point for developing students' essential knowledge. At the same time, such language items do not need to be studied in isolation, and the examples of it in this film are therefore well suited to adding sufficient linguistic variation to sustain students' interest and expand their linguistic repertoire in more than one direction at a time. The first instance occurs before Ted goes to look for a job, so the scene can be rewatched subsequently, and studied in conjunction with another scene featuring legal lexicon that comes after Ted's successful job hunt.

After Joanna had confronted Ted at the restaurant with her desire to have Billy back, Ted is determined to fight and thus visits a lawyer. Their conversation includes both a number of legal terms, as well as a series of sporting figures of speech, attesting to the fact that the lawyer was once very involved in playing sport. The instructor can first present a list of the

target vocabulary that includes both kinds of language for one half of the class to try to distinguish between. Next, the other half of the students can be given the meanings in random order. As a listening exercise, they take it in turns to ask "What do you think 'desertion' means?" and "What words mean 'to challenge after losing'?" and so on. If students guess correctly, they will answer respectively "I think it means 'leaving someone completely'" and "I think the correct word is 'to appeal'." To confirm matters, students simply swap lists and reverse roles.

Shortly after Ted finds a new job, the court case itself begins. As the whole affair is very much a battle of the lawyers' wits and witnesses' emotions, a focal point is the most basic way in which the former attempt to protect the latter from vicious questions. This time, then, the target language consists of only three words; "Objection!" "Sustained" and "Overruled." As a very easy entry into studying these words, students can just listen to the short scene without picture, and count how many times (6) they hear the first of these key words, and how many times they hear the second (1) and third (5). After discussing the meaning, students then watch the scene and try to catch more substantially exactly what Joanna's lawyer was objecting to. It may be too much to expect students to be able to verbalize all this information, so to assist their comprehension tactics, the points can be given in random order for them to sequence correctly. They will include; "Joanna's lawyer objected when Ted's lawyer asked Joanna: exactly how many boyfriends she had; the number of continuing relationships she had"; and so on.

Comparisons

One of the essential foci of *Kramer vs. Kramer* is the question of what

makes a good parent, in the context of mothers as compared with fathers. From the beginning of the movie, Margaret has been the example of how a mother can apparently succeed even as a single parent. This point can be reviewed effectively by asking the students to research what Ted said to her after the second accident when she had been so helpful. (He asked her to look after Billy should anything happen as he she is a good mother).

The whole movie up to this point has traced Ted's progress from incompetent, work-obsessed father to someone who now realizes that he will do anything to be the kind of parent that Billy deserves. This development should also be reviewed before watching the key court scenes, where the subject is dramatically discussed. Thus, students should first remember some of the mistakes Ted had made early on (ignoring Joanna's feelings; losing his temper too easily; being late to pick up Billy; misunderstanding his feelings by trying to hide Joanna's photos; and so on). Balancing out these points, students should recall Ted's subsequent achievements (winning Billy's respect; teaching him to ride his bicycle; supporting him at school events; sharing the joy of finding a new job with him; and the like).

With this preparation, students will be ready to appreciate the court room debate better. First, they should try to generalize on the subject by making a list of qualities or actions (other than those already mentioned above) that denote a good parent. Then, they can listen to what Margaret says about this in regard to Ted (she says he reads to Billy, and spends time with him, playing and talking). At the overbearing insistence of Joanna's lawyer, she has to admit that she once called Ted insensitive, which should also be brought to the class' attention to understand the way that lawyers must try to slant the facts in order to win their case.

The real comparison begins with the testimonies of Ted and Joanna, who must both convince the judge that they are the fitter parent if they wish

to win custody of Billy. Ted's central argument is that being a good parent does not depend on one's gender. Students can listen to what points he repeats from Margaret's testimony (talking and reading to Billy) and what new ones he adds (taking Billy to school, plus eating with him and listening to him). They should also try to catch the particular qualities by which he defines being a good parent — constancy, patience and being there.

Last, students can conduct their own debate in groups or as a whole class, playing the parts of Ted, Margaret, Joanna, the lawyers and the judge. Using their knowledge of the movie, plus points from their imagination that they can persuade the judge are true, each should present their point. To this end, they should recall Joanna's line ("I'm his mother") as well as her lawyer's attack on Ted over responsibility for the accident, which he claims has seriously disfigured the boy.

Solutions

After the class has come to a consensus over what they think about being a good parent, they can suggest what verdict the judge is likely to reach, as well as explaining his probable justification. In the scene shortly afterwards, where Ted's lawyer reads him the actual decision, students should listen to the first few seconds only, as Ted tells the lawyer he lost before the lawyer even speaks. To raise interest in this, students can speculate how he knew — the instructor can suggest a list of alternatives for them to choose from, such as: Ted received a letter; someone phoned him; the lawyer looked disappointed; it was in the newspaper; and so forth. Generally, however, if students are given enough time, they may come up with a wide variety of interesting ideas.

The students watch and listen to the letter, which the teacher would do

well to paraphrase in simpler English, as it contains untransferrable court language. As the decision may well differ from the class' expected solution, they should consider what they think Ted's reaction will be (he first wants to appeal, but changes his mind when the lawyer says Billy will have to testify) before watching the end of the scene. Next, they should consider how Ted will break the news to Billy by writing a much simplified version of the letter that the lawyer read out.

Before watching Ted's explanation of the solution, students should also think about Billy's reaction. The instructor can explain that Billy will be worried about a number of things for them to speculate what points in particular Billy will include. Again, if deemed necessary, the teacher can give a list containing several items, not all of which occur in Billy's mind; riding his bike; living with Joanna; where he will sleep; meals; stories; and so on. Students listen to Ted's explanation and Billy's reaction. They can compare how Ted explained the verdict in language easy enough for his son to understand with their own versions. They should note how Ted makes the solution sound positive and attractive by saying that the judge thought it was a good idea and expressing enthusiasm at being able to meet Billy regularly. As for Billy's reaction, as well as confirming which of their ideas matched, they should decide which of Billy's points he is most worried about — this should be clear to them as Billy cries when he says he is worried about Ted phoning him and about his not liking living with Joanna.

In concluding this segment on solutions, students should be asked if they agree with or can understand the verdict and the accompanying rationale, especially if it indeed differed from the result that they anticipated. If they are uneasy about it, the instructor can indicate that the solution which the judge offered may not after all be final, and sustain interest in watching till the very end by asking students to wait until they see Joanna's reaction to

the verdict in the final scene. For students who have not seen the movie before, it may be an appropriate additional exercise to ask them to speculate on how they think Joanna will take the news of her victory.

Parallels

Students should remember well Ted's first disastrous attempt to make breakfast for Billy near the beginning of the movie as it was very vividly enacted. The instructor can ask them to try recalling some of the many mistakes that Ted had made. If they are able to recall most or all of these clearly, a more challenging approach is to ask them what they remember the characters saying — for example, which of Ted's mistakes did Billy actually point out to him and, in return, what mistake did Ted point out that Billy was making? To ensure a varied approach, students can express some of these points in the form of what the correct way to make French toast is, and also to compare it to the way they make the same or similar dishes in their own country, as even when a meal has the same name, it does not mean that the way it is made is 100% identical.

As students watch the next scene, they will see immediately how the basic situation of making breakfast together is a parallel of the earlier occasion. They should also notice how the details are quite different, as Ted and Billy harmonize perfectly to make a demonstration worthy of showing on a cooking show! The only problem, of course, is that they do not speak. As the close of the scene is a release of emotion (for Billy, an open one, and for Ted, hidden) the teacher should pause before that point and have students devise a narration on how to make the meal, suitable for a cooking class.

The actual cooking, however, is only the superficial aspect of this

scene, so when reshowing it and including the moving display of compassion at the end, the teacher should ask students to look at the scene from a different angle this time. Firstly, he or she should ask students to notice other differences between the two scenes in parallel, other than the actual cooking. Thus, they should notice the characters' appearance, expression, dress, and, most importantly, their emotion. At this point, even if students have been able to recall all the details of the original action accurately, they should be asked to rewatch it, mining the scene for information, which they can compare the later scene with on the lines of non-cooking factors.

The class should now be able to find a range of points which they had hardly noticed before to express in English. These will include the change in Ted's appearance from disheveled to orderly; the shift to dark, somber clothes to reflect the sadness of the occasion; his evident loss of weight, caused by having to work even harder as a father than as a top employee in a busy advertising agency; and, most significantly, the change in his character.

To deepen the parallel study approach even further, students can be asked to think of any other parallels they may have spotted in the movie, no matter how small. While this may take them beyond intermediate study, as their course is concluding, they should be progressing. The elevator scenes when Joanna left, when she apologized after the court case, and at the very end are a good starting point.

Changes

As students watch the final scene and learn how Joanna has a change of heart by deciding after all to leave Billy with Ted, they hear her say some of the things she should have done (painted clouds in his new room like she

did in his old one). The instructor can remind students about Ted's similar reflection during the court case ("I should have done a lot of things differently.") In reviewing the film finally, possibly with a term test in mind, the instructor can ask students to think of as many other things that the characters should or should not have done to both practice an important pattern, and connect many of the important pieces of action via a convenient focus.

This will serve both to help students evaluate each character's role in the story, as well as to help them assess what changes have taken place in each of them. As character transformation usually constitutes the major development in any movie, a concluding review of such changes is a strategy that can and should be used at every level of study. The simplest approach is to tell students some of these most important changes, without telling them which character is being referred to. This can be done in a simple question form such as: "Who said that they never knew who they really were, but eventually learned a great deal about him or herself?" Students should then identify not only whom the change applies to, but also the context in which the point of change occurred. Thus, in this particular example, students should recall that this is what Joanna said about herself at the restaurant. At a deeper level, they can assess for themselves the value of the change. Students may consider that Joanna actually learnt more about herself during the court case.

Of the many possibilities, some of the major changes that should obviously be covered in *Kramer vs. Kramer* will include: Ted's increased respect for homelife; Jim's turnabout towards Ted, whom he once wanted to help get to the top of his profession; Margaret's decision to remarry under the influence of the court case; her changed opinion of Ted's ability as a parent; and Billy's double change from loving son through naughty child to

comparative maturity.

As a follow up activity, or as part of this review process, students can personalize the theme by talking about changes in themselves, using the same kinds of pattern presented in the review exercise: used to/ at one stage/ at first/ originally/ never before/ to begin with/ initially . . . but/ gradually/ ultimately/ finally/ eventually, and so forth.This is also a good point to ask students to describe any cultural differences that they have observed.

In the same way, the review exercise approach can be used with a film at any level of study to prepare for a final assessment, with students rewatching the whole movie by themselves, rereading all their notes taken during the course of their studies, and reviewing class tests where these have been given. If a test as such is not thought appropriate or necessary, an alternative is to have students compose a free style review.

Follow Ups

The possibility of following up on a film after having watched and studied it to the end will depend upon the goals of the course as designed by the individual instructor. It may be that a term exam is enough to complete the course of study, but the nature of the test requires some attention. To ensure that students are making progress, it may also be a good option to conduct regular class tests. Where the aim of a course is not to overload students with many detailed questions at the end of it, but instead to create more easily achieved short term goals on a regular basis, the occasional class test may be better than a single jumbo final examination.

Similarly, the way a test is conducted also needs attuning to course objectives. If the instructor wishes to stress listening and oracy over

written tests, for example, it may be better to read out rather than handing out questions, or even have students answering aloud instead of in writing. Certainly, in terms of the context of film communication, test questions should emphasize all forms of interaction, so a variety of test modes may be the best choice in the final analysis, including some assignments that directly relate the film to the student's own experience or situation.

A more open style of test will be for students in essay form or as a spoken presentation to review their whole course of study. They should be able to describe some of the main characters and explain what changes happen to them during the story. They should try to express and justify their opinion of the movie. Students should also make some kind of evaluation of the method of study, thus ensuring the learning experience is two-way, as the instructor may pick up several useful pointers for future use with film-communication study. A class should also express its thought on what future title or titles it would like to study, giving a basic rationale for their choice.

The instructor may prefer that students follow up on viewing the film by researching the situation in their own countries with regards to such issues as: the way couples share household duties; equality at work; attitudes to single parents; child raising by the father instead of the mother; and so on. If teaching in a foreign country, the teacher can ask students to survey family, friends and acquaintances. If studying as a second language in an English speaking country, students can each choose different aspects to devise surveys which they will ask each other questions for.

The instructor can help with collation of information gathered in class as a joint session, stressing approximation to form an overall picture, while at the same time reminding students that the results of an informal survey should never been considered as objective statements of fact. Thus, stu-

dents asking ten people about a particular issue, instead of saying how many give a certain answer, can translate 0 or 1 as "no-one" or "nearly no-one", 2 or 3 as "a few people", 4～6 as "about half the people interviewed", 7 or 8 as "most people" and 9 or 10 as "nearly everyone" or "everyone".

Conclusion

There are many possibilties for cultural follow ups, such as comparing Ted's situation with that of working fathers in Japan and recent reforms that allow Japanese fathers more time off work to spend with their young children. However, culture, like language, cannot be taught head on simply by saying "This is it - learn it!" Instead, achievable tasks that focus on meaningful language and situations, supported by vivid cinematic visualization of the same, will likely lead to deeper understanding. Thus the diary approach described above, for example, can even help students feel that they are living the language and culture.

Author's Note: This paper was based on the writer's "Video and Culture in Language Teaching" colloquium submission accepted for JALT 1996 in Hiroshima and teaching/study guides the writer wrote for Sony Pictures.

References

Jaffe, Stanley. (Dir.) *Kramer vs. Kramer*. RCA/Columbia Pictures, 1982.

Wood, David John. (Chief Ed.) *Kramer vs. Kramer*: School Curriculum Teaching and Study Guides. Tokyo: Sony Pictures Entertainment (formerly RCA/Columbia), 1992.